

## How migration motives change over migration distance: evidence on variation across socioeconomic and demographic groups

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**How migration motives change over migration distance:  
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How Migration Motives Change over Migration Distance: Evidence on  
Variation across Socioeconomic and Demographic Groups

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# How Migration Motives Change over Migration Distance: Evidence on Variation across Socioeconomic and Demographic Groups

## Abstract

Migration researchers have long known that motives for changing place of residence vary over migration distance. Typically, short-distance moves are regarded as motivated by housing considerations and longer-distance moves primarily by employment considerations. Using a large-scale survey on migration motives, this paper explores how migration motives change over migration distance. Particular attention is paid to variations across socioeconomic and demographic groups. The results show that the housing- versus employment-driven migration dichotomy, over short and long distances, respectively, is still somewhat valid, though the present findings give a much more nuanced interpretation. The paper reveals considerable variation in migration motives, not only over migration distance, but particularly in relation to migrant socioeconomic and demographic characteristics.

Keywords: Migration, Motives, Distance, Survey data, Sweden

JEL codes: O15, O18, R11, R23

INTRODUCTION

It is commonly believed that peoples’ motives for changing their place of residence vary over migration distance. Typically, short-distance moves are regarded as motivated by housing considerations and longer-distance moves primarily by employment considerations (e.g., GORDON and LAMONT, 1982; GORDON and MOLHO, 1998; CLARK and HUANG, 2003). While this notion forms an important basis for the existing understanding of migration, it rests on surprisingly little empirical research.

Two factors help explain why the relationship between migration motives and migration distance has been inadequately researched. First, data limitations have forced most studies to use movement across or within administrative boundaries when defining migration as either short or long distance (WHITE and MEUSER, 1988). However, migration usually varies greatly in terms of distance and geographical context, simply because different regions vary in size, shape, and settlement pattern. In the extreme, an individual may move a short distance to a neighbouring house and still be considered a long-distance migrant if he or she crosses an administrative boundary. Second, the standard procedure for collecting data on migrant motives has been to use surveys with fixed response alternatives. It has recently been suggested that such approaches may be more problematic than previously assumed (NIEDOMYSL and MALMBERG, 2009). Not only can bias arise from suggesting response alternatives to respondents, it is also difficult to know what alternatives to include, how to phrase them, and whether all alternatives are equally suitable for the migrant groups of interest.

The overarching aim of this paper is to determine how migration motives change over migration distance, paying particular attention to variations across socioeconomic and demographic groups. The data employed not only contain detailed information on migrant characteristics and migration distance, but, more importantly, draw on a recent large-scale

survey in which migrants describe, in their own words, their reasons for migration. Taken together, this enables exploration, in greater detail than previously possible, of the relationship between migration motives and migration distance. The paper is well positioned to contribute significantly to the migration literature.

## RESEARCH CONTEXT

Migration is a significant event in most people's lives: it is not something undertaken lightly, without seriously considering its consequences (LEE, 1966; FIELDING, 1992). However, there are key differences between different types of moves, and distance moved is obviously important in most cases. People who only move a short distance can usually continue living the same way as before the move, but people who move a longer distance are likely to experience a more dramatic change. This was discussed some time ago by ROSEMAN (1971), who made a very useful pedagogical distinction in separating migration into two categories based on the daily/weekly reciprocal movement patterns of a migrant. His two categories, 'total' and 'partial' displacement migrations, are determined by whether a migrant changes all (total displacement) or only some (partial displacement) of the significant places (e.g., school, workplace, and grocery store) visited on a daily/weekly basis. Roseman's two categories arguably highlight the differences in general importance between short- and long-distance migration and why it is valuable, though problematic, to distinguish between them.

From a theoretical perspective, the importance of distance for migration is often framed within a human capital approach (e.g., SJAASTAD, 1962), where migration is seen as an investment undertaken only if the expected returns exceed the benefits of remaining in the same place. Migrants are accordingly assumed to seek out places offering the greatest expected net return of benefits (SHIELDS and SHIELDS, 1989). Migration distance is considered to have a deterrent effect, primarily due to lack of information about potential

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destinations, the costs of moving, and the loss of location-specific capital at the place of origin (DAVANZO and MORRISON, 1981). However, as far as the author is aware, little has been said about how various migration motives might fit into that framework, assuming that motives vary over migration distance.

In a well-known study, GLEAVE and CORDEY-HAYES (1977) were likely the first to explicitly examine the relationship between migration distance and migration motives. Using survey data from 1970 on the migration motives of British homebuyers, they were able to demonstrate a substantial increase in the prevalence of employment-related motives over migration distance. While only approximately 2% of those moving up to 8 km reported employment as the main motive for migration, the proportion citing this motive rose to approximately one third of respondents moving 40–80 km and to 70% for those moving distances exceeding 160 km. The converse was found for migration motives related to housing and marriage: some 40% of respondents cited housing reasons when moving up to 8 km and 36% cited marriage, but for migration distances greater than 160 km, these categories only made up 3% and 3%, respectively.

A quite unusual study is that of KÜHNEL (1978), who drew on data from the Czech Socialist Republic, where migrants registered their main reason for migration when registering for permanent residence in a new location. Migration distances were inferred indirectly by referring to movement across boundaries at different scales (i.e., communities, districts, and regions), and data are provided for each year from 1966 to 1973, making it a unique source of information. Interestingly, most migrants, regardless of migration distance, cited housing reasons for moving. According to KÜHNEL (1978, p. 4), this is the result of specific Czechoslovak conditions, including poor housing conditions and policies to level out economic differences between regions. Short-distance migration (i.e., between communities within districts) was strongly dominated by housing reasons, cited by over 50% of

respondents. However, even when it comes to long-distance migration (i.e., between regions), housing constitutes the most common reason, cited by 35% of migrants in 1966 and 38% in 1973. Labour market migration motives vary quite significantly with time and migration distance: in 1966, this motive accounted for 23% of short-distance moves (14% in 1973) and 40% of long-distance moves (30% in 1973).

OWEN and GREEN (1992) analysed data similar to those used by GLEAVE and CORDEY-HAYES (1977), from a survey carried out in Britain in 1981, also of house purchasers with mortgages from a particular company. Their findings indicated that housing (mainly that current accommodations were too small) and life cycle factors (mainly getting married) were clearly the main motives for short-distance moves (up to 16 km). Very few respondents reported housing-related reasons for long-distance moves. Work-related reasons displayed an opposite pattern, increasing dramatically in importance with increasing migration distance. While only 3% of respondents cited work-related reasons for moving up to 8 km, this proportion rose to 25% for those who moved 16–40 km and then more than doubled to 53% for those who moved 40–80 km. Employment-related migration accounted for nearly 80% of moves of distances exceeding 160 km.

CLARK and HUANG (2004) also used British survey data (the British Household Panel Sample) covering the 1990s, but employed a cruder definition of short- and long-distance migration, i.e., more or less than 50 km. They found that the largest single motive for long-distance migration was employment (cited by 36%), followed by family change (23%) and housing-related motives (22%). The most important motives for short-distance moves, on the other hand, were clearly housing related, being cited by 45% of respondents, followed by family change (19%) and employment-related motives (7%).

More recently, CLARK and DAVIES-WITHERS (2007) used data covering 1970–1992 from the U.S. Panel Study of Income Dynamics and found that employment was the most



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common reason for long-distance migration (defined as moving across county boundaries), cited by slightly over a third of respondents, followed by housing, cited by 27%. Housing was a much more common reason for short-distance migration, being cited by 58% of respondents, while employment was cited by only 9%. The data, however, are not easily interpreted, since one category of migration motive was ‘unintended’ – somewhat ambiguous compared with the other categories.

The U.S. Census Bureau regularly collects information on migration motives in their Current Population Survey (SCHACHTER, 2001). This large-scale survey asks migrants about their main reason for moving, and the data allow for detailed analyses of motives and individual characteristics. Using county boundaries to define long- and short-distance migration, the results indicate that the most common motive for short-distance migration is housing (cited by 65% of respondents) followed by family-related (26%) and work-related motives (6%). While family reasons are equally important motives for *long-distance* migration, cited by 27% of respondents, work-related reasons increase in importance, being cited by 31%; housing is less important, but is still the single most important motive, being cited by 32% of long-distance migrants.

The studies referred to above have clearly improved our knowledge by demonstrating that migration motives vary with migration distance; however, it should be noted that these studies are somewhat limited. For example, while GLEAVE and CORDEY-HAYES (1977) and OWEN and GREEN (1992) contain excellent information on migration distance, they are limited to a specific group of migrants (house buyers). In contrast, CLARK and HUANG (2004), CLARK and DAVIES-WITHERS (2007), and the U.S. Census Bureau (SCHACHTER, 2001) use a cruder definition of short- and long-distance migration but use more recent data. These differences, along with differences in questionnaire design, make comparisons between the studies problematic. Nonetheless, all these studies indicate –

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3 although with less strength over time – that housing considerations are still central motives for  
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5 short-distance migration, while long-distance migration seems primarily driven by  
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7 employment considerations.  
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10 In Sweden, on which the present research focuses, studies using material other than  
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12 survey data on migration motives emphasize the influence of labour market factors on  
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14 migration, when it comes to analysing both aggregate migration flows (e.g., FREDRIKSSON,  
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16 1999; NAKOSTEEN and WESTERLUND, 2004; ELIASSON and WESTERLUND, 2008)  
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18 and the residential preferences of potential migrants (NIEDOMYSL, 2008).  
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22 Simple as this may seem, the notion that there is a straightforward distinction between  
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24 short-distance housing-related migration and long-distance employment-related migration has  
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26 been increasingly questioned (HALFACREE, 2004; CLARK and DAVIES-WITHERS,  
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28 2007). While some claims refer directly to a lack of empirical research, arguments have been  
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30 made linking this issue to more general societal changes, citing the decline in the importance  
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32 of employment considerations in determining migrants' destination choices (e.g.,  
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34 FOTHERINGHAM *et al.*, 2000). For example, the ageing of western societies means that an  
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36 increasing share of the population will no longer have to live near the workplace. Moreover,  
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38 ever faster commuting and new information and communication technologies will likely  
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40 mean less dependence on living close to the workplace. If it is at all true that 'migration  
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42 begins where commuting ends' (LONG *et al.*, 1988), such changes will very likely affect  
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44 migration. In addition, much employment nowadays requires higher education. University  
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46 towns not only attract business and industry, but they conveniently also attract students, so  
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48 that the workforce may already be in place when the students finish their education. In this  
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50 case, however, the migration that brought the students near their employers is no longer easily  
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52 categorized as employment related. For these reasons, it can be speculated that the factors  
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determining migration may have changed. Obviously, such claims – if valid – will likely vary between migrant groups, an issue that calls for empirical testing.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Survey data

This paper uses data from Sweden, a country where high-quality, detailed data are available for migration research. Survey data were collected in collaboration with Statistics Sweden in spring 2007 using a postal questionnaire sent to a stratified sample of 10,000 migrants from the total population of 244,704 migrants who had moved at least 20 kilometres in 2006. This group was stratified by migrant sex, age (four age groups in a total range of 18–74 years), and migration distance (four groups). The questionnaire contained 40 questions covering various aspects of the migration and the migrants’ individual characteristics. After two reminders, 4909 migrants had returned useful responses. In addition, data from the official registers were added by Statistics Sweden, including variables such as migration distance, income, and a calibration variable assigning a weight for each respondent according to his/her share of the total migrant population. The calibration variable also reduced skewness originating from non-responses, making it possible to draw conclusions about the whole migrant population.

Method

The first part of the analysis uses descriptive measures to explore how migration motives vary over migration distance for different socioeconomic and demographic groups. In the second part of the analysis, binary and multinomial logistic regression modelling is used to statistically determine the influence of migrant characteristics on migration motives. Logistic regression is an appropriate method to use when the key dependent variables are categorical,

as is the case with migration motives (a similar approach was previously employed in a study of migration motives by VON REICHERT, 2001). First, binary logistic regressions are run to indicate whether there are significant differences between particular migration motives and the motives cited by other migrants. One regression model is run for each of the six dependent variables (i.e., migration motives), and the models estimate the effect of the independent variables (i.e., migrant characteristics and migration distance) on the probability of migrating for a specific motive. Second, since the results indicate significant differences, and since the binary model, as it is specified, does not allow comparisons across the specific groups (e.g., employment versus education), use of a multinomial logit model is justified. The reference category in the multinomial model constitutes those migrants who cited employment, since this was the most frequently mentioned migration motive (see Table 1 below).

## Variables

*Dependent variables.* The dependent variables, six different categories of migration motives shown in Table 1, were derived from the survey where the respondents had been asked to state the main motive for their most recent migration. This open-ended question offered no response alternatives and let respondents respond in their own words, in order to avoid the bias that may arise from suggesting specific alternatives. These responses were transcribed and roughly sorted according to their wording, then coded into 23 initial categories before being sorted into six final categories. The 23 initial categories were quite detailed, and in the vast majority of cases there was little uncertainty as to the category to which a specific response belonged. Housing, for example, one of the six final categories, consisted of five initial categories: 'smaller/more easily maintained dwelling', 'larger/spacious dwelling', 'housing economics/leases', 'neighbours', and 'other dwelling-related' (the 23 initial categories are provided in NIEDOMYSL and MALMBERG, 2009).

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It should be noted that while the responses were given by individuals, the open-ended approach allowed for coding the responses at the household level when appropriate. For example, in cases where a respondent referred to his/her spouse getting a new job as the main reason for migration, such responses were coded as employment related to take into account the fact that migration decisions are usually made jointly amongst household members (see e.g., BAILEY *et al.*, 2004; BUSHIN, 2009; COOKE, 2008). These cases were relatively few, except in the employment category where 13% of *all* employment-related motives were coded in this way.

--- TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE ---

Although response coding is central to data reliability, potential problems associated with coding process should not be exaggerated. For example, 97 respondents had simply written the word ‘work’ (*arbete*) and 17 respondents had written ‘a job’ (*arbetet*), leaving little room for misunderstanding. Nonetheless, since not all responses were as simple as this, a more sophisticated test was carried out whereby five coders independently coded 500 randomly selected responses to test the level of agreement between the coders. Krippendorff’s alpha (a standard measure in content analysis expressing the extent to which the observed amount of agreement among coders exceeds a completely random coding) was used and yielded an alpha value of 0.82, establishing the reliability of the open-ended questions approach. Furthermore, the test indicated that it was relatively more common for the coders to disagree on responses that, according to most coders, belonged to the ‘other reasons’ category. The ‘housing’ and ‘living environment’ categories also displayed somewhat higher rates of inter-coder discrepancy. Further details of the motive categories and the reliability test

as well as a more general discussion of the use of open-ended questions when researching migration motives is provided in NIEDOMYSL and MALMBERG (2009).

The use of migration motives as dependent variables, instead of migration distance, warrants a brief discussion. Though the migration decision making process that leads to the decision to move for a specific motive is not known, people are more likely to first come up with the idea of moving (for whatever reason), and then consider the pros and cons of moving versus staying in place (where distance may clearly be influential). This motivates the inclusion of distance as an independent variable, but it is still not possible to say that there is a straightforward causality running from distance to motive, since only the outcome is known (i.e. an individual moved for a specific motive over a certain distance). Nothing is known about those who may have considered moving, but decided not to do so, nor about the role distance may have played for that decision. However, this is not considered a problem since the main purpose of this paper is not to determine causality, but rather to examine how these two variables interact.

*Independent variables.* A summary of the independent variables is provided in Table 2 and briefly explained in the following. Two variables that describe the respondents' demographic characteristics are included: *gender* and *age*. The four age groups are intended to correspond broadly to different life phases. Four variables that describe the respondents' socioeconomic characteristics are included: *civil status*, *education*, *income*, and *occupation*. Information on *civil status* is drawn from register data and, although the categories are self-explanatory, it should be noted that people registered as single, divorced, or widowed may still be living in a relationship (only marriages are included in the official registers). *Education* is divided into four categories. Compulsory schooling in Sweden lasts nine years and upper-secondary school adds three more, after which it is possible to embark on a university education. The

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last group was split into those with a university degree requiring three years or less of study and those with a degree requiring over three years, i.e., with 15 or more years of education.

--- TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE ---

Three *income* groups were calculated using the lower and upper quartiles of the Swedish population’s annual disposable income (the amount left after tax) as cut-off points. The low-income group thus consists of people with disposable income of under SEK 120 thousand per year while the high-income group consists of people with disposable income exceeding SEK 210 thousand. Information on the respondents’ *occupation* before migration was drawn from the survey and divided into four groups: *employed* (including the self-employed), *unemployed*, *students*, and *retirees*. Very few respondents, mainly those on sick leave for over three months or who categorized themselves as maintaining the household, were excluded. Finally, *migration distance* was divided into five categories. Note that the (non-weighted) sample size for migration of 101–150 km is relatively small, so caution should be exercised in the any analyses of results for this distance.

RESULTS

Descriptive results

The results presented in Fig. 1 clearly indicate that migration motives vary over migration distance. Motives that refer to housing, employment, and education all display significant variation. Housing-related motives dominate the shortest migration distance, being cited by 35% of migrants, but drop considerably in importance with longer distances where they are cited by only a small proportion of migrants. Almost the opposite pattern is found for



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3 education- and employment-related migration. Migration to begin higher education is  
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5 negligible over short distances, but its share steadily increases and peaks at 34% of migrants  
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7 having moved 101–150 km, before decreasing to 23% over the longest distances.  
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10 Employment-related migration displays a similar pattern and is the most often mentioned  
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12 motive of long-distance migration. Taken together, these last two motive categories account  
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14 for 50–60% of migration of distances exceeding 100 km.  
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20 --- FIG. 1 ABOUT HERE ---  
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25 However, not all categories of migration motives exhibit such dramatic changes. Social  
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27 motives, motives referring to the living environment, and the ‘other reasons’ category vary  
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29 only slightly over migration distance (although to a lesser extent as regards living  
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31 environment, which appears to be more important over shorter distances). Nonetheless, social  
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33 reasons are very prominent over all distances, making up approximately one quarter of the  
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35 cited migration motives. Closer inspection of the open-ended responses turned out to be  
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37 particularly valuable for as regards social motives. It was revealed that short-distance movers  
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39 more often had responded that they had moved in with someone or separated, whereas long-  
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41 distance movers more frequently reported moving in order to come close to family and  
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43 friends. Also notable is the proportion of migrants citing living environment, which, together  
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45 with the arguably closely related housing motive, account for over 50% of migrations of 20–  
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51 35 km.  
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53 The finding that most migrants cited reasons other than employment, even for migration  
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55 over longer distances, warrants further clarification. It should not be taken to imply that  
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57 employment has lost its importance for migration. In fact, the situation looks quite different  
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59 when comparing those who cited employment as their main migration motive with those who,  
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in response to another question, stated that they changed their workplace when migrating (see Fig. 2 below). While only 15% of all short-distance migrants said that they changed their workplace and 16% cited employment as their most important migration motive, that relationship changes quite significantly over increased migration distance. Approximately 60% of those who migrated a distance exceeding 100 km reported changing their workplace, but only 30% cited employment as their main migration motive. Even greater differences are registered for those who migrated 150 km or more. Hence, it is obvious that a migrant may cite a factor other than employment as most important migration motive, but still change his or her workplace. Employment is thus likely to constitute a precondition for migration in some cases and a driving force in others. Over shorter distances, people may choose to commute instead of migrate (ELIASSON *et al.*, 2003).

--- FIG. 2 ABOUT HERE ---

While it is beyond the scope of this paper to give a full descriptive review of the relationship between migrant characteristics, migration motives, and migration distance, a summary is provided in Fig. 3 (note that only two distance categories, 20–35 km and >150 km, are shown in the figure). Starting with gender differences (3.1), men are more likely to cite employment-related motives than are women, who more often cite education and social reasons. Migration distance does not appear to change these relationships between the sexes to any great extent.

Looking at age differences (3.2), it is not surprising to find that young people frequently cite education as a motive for long-distance migration (though 45% of migrants is still notably large), nor is it surprising that employment reasons are prominent for migrants 26–59 years old. Since employment and education are not concerns of the oldest age group, more of them are likely to move for housing, living environment, and social reasons (the last only in the

case of long-distance migration, however). It should also be noted that the oldest age group provided a much larger share of responses belonging to the 'other reasons' category. This suggests that the coding procedure of the open-ended questions may not have been ideal for this group of migrants.

--- FIG. 3 ABOUT HERE ---

One finding as regards income differences (3.3) is a slight tendency for people with low incomes to move more often over short distances for employment reasons, while the opposite is found for people with high incomes, who tend to move more often over long distances for employment. The latter group also tends to move more often over longer distances for social reasons.

The most conspicuous differences between the different educational groups (3.4) appear over long-distance migration. Having a university degree (requiring more than three years of study) considerably increases the likelihood of employment-related migration. Migrants with only the nine years of compulsory education are far more likely to cite social reasons as the most important motive for migration. The two intermediate educational groups set themselves apart by having a much larger share of education-related migration.

Occupation before migration (3.5) is an individual characteristic that varies considerably in relation to migration motive and distance. Most findings were quite expected, such as the finding that students migrate more often for education reasons and that 47% of unemployed respondents cite employment-related reasons as the main reason for migration. Other results may appear somewhat more unexpected, such as the result that a notable proportion of retired migrants cited social reasons (48%) and housing (20%) as their main motives for long-distance migration.

Finally, the four civil status categories (3.6) vary considerably between both short- and long-distance migration. Married and widowed respondents very often cited housing reasons for moving short distances. Those categorized as separated frequently cited social reasons for migration, though this was partly an effect of the motive categorization where separation and divorce were considered social reasons. However, widowed respondents were even more likely to cite social reasons for long-distance migration.

Regression results

The descriptive statistics presented above, while interesting in various ways, only show one individual characteristic at a time and hence can only hint at how different characteristics interact. Table 3 presents the results of the binary logistic regressions that take into account how migrant characteristics influence the likelihood of moving for a specific reason (only statistically significant variables are reported in the table).

People moving for education are likely to be women, very young (18–25 years old), single, students, and long-distance migrants.

Employment-driven migrants are more likely to be male, married or single, highly educated, unemployed, and move long distances. Somewhat unexpectedly, high-income migrants are much less likely to move for employment reasons (people with middle incomes are the most likely to move for this reason). This could presumably be explained by the expectation that people with high incomes are likely to have reached a career phase in which employment is no longer a key driver.

There is a positive relationship between increasing age and the probability of citing living environment as the main reason for migration. Compared with singles, married migrants are more likely to emphasize living environment; widowed migrants, in contrast, are less likely to do so. People with middle and high incomes, as well as retired people, are more

inclined to cite living environment, and there is a clear distance decay in the probability of stating this motive.

--- TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE ---

Older people are more likely to move for housing reasons, as are married and widowed migrants. Migrants with more education are also more likely to cite housing, although less so than are retired migrants. There is a negative relationship between migration distance and the probability of moving for environmental reasons.

Presumably reflecting traditional gender roles in society, women are found to have a higher probability of moving for social reasons. However, the social reasons category is somewhat ambiguous, as it includes respondents who stated that they had, for example, moved in with someone, separated, or moved to be closer to family and friends. In terms of age differences, the 26–37 year olds set themselves apart in having a notably higher probability of moving for social reasons, and the same is true of divorced and widowed migrants. However, some caution should be exercised regarding the respondents' civil status and the social reasons category, since a social reason could in fact relate to civil status (e.g., moving due to divorce).

Table 4 presents the results of the multinomial logistic regression where migrants who cited employment reasons constitute the reference category. Overall, and as expected, the conclusions of the multinomial logistic regression are very similar to those drawn from the binary logistic regressions. However, it can now be firmly concluded that there are significant differences between the groups. For example, men are more likely to have moved for employment reasons whereas women have significantly higher odds of moving for any of the other categories of motives. In particular, women are almost twice as likely to have cited a

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social reason for moving. In terms of age differences, the oldest age group stands out. It is hardly surprising that older migrants are unlikely to have moved for employment reasons, but the findings presented here may contribute to an improved understanding of other research. For example, NIVALAINEN (2004) assumed, in agreement with most economic literature, that long-distance migration is mainly driven by employment considerations but found, against expectations, that older migrants in Finland were more likely to move over longer distances compared to younger migrants. The results presented here illustrates that when older migrants move, they are driven by a variety of non-economic factors (see also Fig. 3.2), but it should of course be kept in mind that in absolute numbers, older migrants only account for a minority of long-distance migrants.

--- TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE ---

Lastly, note the confirmation that long-distance migrants are more likely to move for education reasons compared to employment reasons. Though this is clearly an interesting finding, considering the hegemonic role usually ascribed to employment for explaining long-distance migration. However, it should presumably not be taken to imply that the importance of employment for long-distance migration has been overthrown, but – recalling Fig. 2 – is more likely to reflect the role of employment as a precondition for migration in most cases. Arguably, migration for educational purposes is less likely to be obscured by other reasons for moving.

CONCLUSIONS

The departure point of this paper was the notion that people’s migration motives vary over migration distance, short-distance migration traditionally being regarded as housing related

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3 and long-distance migration as driven by employment considerations. The present findings  
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5 confirm that, while there is still some validity to such claims, they are highly general notions  
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7 whose relevance varies considerably depending on the migrant group. This paper  
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9 demonstrates the importance of acknowledging the diversity of migrants in terms of their  
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11 socioeconomic and demographic characteristics. While migration researchers have known of  
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13 this for quite some time, mainly from qualitative studies or studies focussing on migration to  
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15 specific environments, it has previously only been demonstrated in quite specialized studies  
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17 restricted to specific migrant groups. The present paper has demonstrated, more  
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19 comprehensively than previous research has, how migration motives vary over migration  
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21 distance and with a range of individual migrant characteristics. However, it should be recalled  
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23 that moves of under 20 km were not examined in this study, which restricts the conclusions  
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25 that can be drawn about why people move across the entire spectrum of migration distances.  
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31 While the broad scope of the paper precludes highly detailed discussion of the results, it  
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33 should be noted that *all but one* of the individual migrant characteristics (i.e., age, civil status,  
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35 education, income, occupation, and migration distance) displayed varying degrees of  
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37 statistically significant influence on the probabilities of moving for different migration  
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39 reasons (i.e., education, employment, living environment, housing, social, and other reasons).  
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41 The only exception was gender: men and women were found to have the same probability of  
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43 citing living environment and other reasons as their main migration motive, though they did  
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45 have different probabilities of citing the other four migration reasons.  
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50 The fact that motives varied considerably between different groups has clear  
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52 implications, not only for understanding migration more generally, but arguably also for how  
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54 migration could be more successfully researched using other methodological approaches. For  
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56 example, macro approaches to migration that focus on aggregate migration flows usually treat  
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58 migration flows from one region to another rather crudely; for example, gross or net  
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migration between regions is explained by aggregate measures of regional unemployment. If such approaches paid more attention to migration distance and the characteristics of the migrants that constitute these flows, it would likely be rewarding. For example, this paper has demonstrated that while long-distance migrants may cite reasons other than employment (though largely depending on the migrants' characteristics), most of them do change their workplace when migrating. In a clear majority of cases, therefore, employment is likely a prerequisite for migration that enables people to move for whatever cited reason. This explains why studies of aggregate migration flows have found that labour market factors have positive effects, despite the fact that studies of migration motives using survey data tend to suggest that the proportion of employment-related migration may be diminishing.

The findings presented here are expected to be relevant in other developed countries as well, though two aspects warrant attention: migration for educational purposes and the size and shape of Sweden. First, education was found to be a key driver of long-distance migration in Sweden, for younger migrants in particular (in terms of migration volume, this is by far the most important migrant group). The Swedish higher education system has expanded greatly over the last few decades, and such migration is presumably replacing part of what was earlier employment-related migration. However, in some other countries, education-driven migration may not be as prominent as in Sweden. In the U.S.A., for example, where students who live in dorms during the semester are registered as inhabitants elsewhere (presumably as living with their parents), education-related migration is not detectable (SCHACHTER, 2001). In other countries, such as the U.K., where changes introduced in the latest census now consider students as resident at their school-term address (SIMPSON and BROWN, 2008), education-related migration is likely to suddenly emerge as a 'new' and important phenomenon.

Second, since all countries vary in size, shape, settlement pattern, transportation infrastructure, etc., it follows that the present findings may not be directly transferable to

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3 them. The implications of a migrant moving 100 km in Sweden likely differ from those of a  
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5 migrant moving 100 km, for example, in the U.S.A. or the Netherlands. Since this paper has  
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7 demonstrated that migration motives vary both with migration distance and in relation to  
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9 migrant socioeconomic and demographic characteristics, migration researchers urgently need  
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11 to seize the opportunity and use the increasingly sophisticated data now available in many  
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13 countries to account for this diversity. Acknowledging the heterogeneity of migrants will lead  
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15 to more insightful analyses and allow for stronger generalizations.  
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Table 1. Dependent variables.

	Number (not weighted)	Number (weighted)	Per cent (weighted)
Migration motives			
Education	383	41007	17%
Employment	982	61410	26%
Living environment	761	28226	12%
Housing	1193	38421	16%
Social reasons	1262	57656	24%
Other reasons	328	12825	5%
Total	4909	239545	100%

Table 2. Independent variables.

	Number (not weighted)	Number (weighted)	Per cent (weighted)
Gender			
Male	2177	100016	42%
Female	2732	139529	58%
Age (years)			
18 – 25	1013	95345	40%
26 – 37	1143	79705	33%
38 – 59	1145	47656	20%
60 – 74	1608	16839	7%
Civil status			
Married	1674	49690	21%
Single	2194	165856	69%
Divorced	816	21003	9%
Widowed	225	2994	1%
Education			
Compulsory	1094	23806	10%
Upper-secondary	1626	97677	41%
University < 3 years	698	36298	15%
University >= 3 years	1443	79866	34%
Income			
Low	1714	111757	47%
Middle	2009	88285	37%
High	1186	3905	17%
Occupation			
Employed	2623	128560	58%
Unemployed	251	16302	7%
Student	722	63044	29%
Retired	921	12379	6%
Migration distance (km)			
20 – 35	1215	56743	24%
36 – 50	915	22576	9%
51 – 100	1618	41646	17%
101 – 150	206	21900	9%
150 +	955	96679	40%

Table 3. Binary logistic regression results.

Category	Variable	<u>Education</u>		<u>Employment</u>		<u>Living environment</u>		<u>Housing</u>		<u>Social reasons</u>		<u>Other reasons</u>	
		Odds ratio	95% C.I.	Odds ratio	95% C.I.	Odds ratio	95% C.I.	Odds ratio	95% C.I.	Odds ratio	95% C.I.	Odds ratio	95% C.I.
Gender (ref = male)													
	Female	1.05**	1.02-1.08	0.61**	0.60-0.62			0.97*	0.94-0.99	1.55**	1.52-1.59		
Age (years) (ref = 18-25)													
	26 – 37	0.39**	0.38-0.40	1.38**	1.34-1.42	1.15**	1.10-1.20	0.94*	0.91-0.98	1.66**	1.61-1.70	1.24**	1.17-1.32
	38 – 59	0.09**	0.07-0.10	1.83**	1.76-1.90	1.50**	1.42-1.58	0.90**	0.85-0.94	1.22**	1.18-1.27	2.02**	1.87-2.19
	60 – 74			0.48**	0.44-0.52	1.76**	1.64-1.90	1.68**	1.57-1.80	1.15**	1.08-1.23	2.79**	2.51-3.11
Civil status (ref = single)													
	Married	0.11**	0.09-0.12			1.45**	1.39-1.50	1.86**	1.80-1.93	0.53**	0.53-0.57	1.35**	1.26-1.43
	Divorced	0.57**	0.48-0.67	0.80**	0.76-0.84	0.92*	0.88-0.97	0.72**	0.68-0.76	1.89**	1.81-1.96		
	Widowed			0.34**	0.28-0.41	0.68**	0.61-0.77	1.40**	1.27-1.54	1.45**	1.33-1.59		
Education (ref = compulsory)													
	Upper-secondary	5.76**	5.23-6.33	0.89**	0.85-0.93	1.31**	1.24-1.37	1.12**	1.08-1.18	0.66**	0.64-0.69	0.55**	0.51-0.59
	University < 3 years	7.47**	6.77-8.25	0.95*	0.90-1.00	1.07*	1.02-1.13	1.05**	1.00-1.10	0.57**	0.55-0.60	0.67**	0.62-0.72
	University >= 3 years			2.91**	2.78-3.05	0.77**	0.73-0.81	1.39**	1.33-1.46	0.50**	0.48-0.52	0.61**	0.57-0.65
Income (ref = low)													
	Middle	0.59**	0.53-0.62	1.22**	1.19-1.26	1.31**	1.26-1.35	1.11**	1.07-1.15	1.03*	1.01-1.06	0.77**	0.73-0.81
	High	0.23**	0.21-0.25	0.79**	0.76-0.81	1.36**	1.30-1.42			1.56**	1.51-1.62	0.75**	0.70-0.80
Occupation (ref = employed)													
	Unemployed			1.70**	1.64-1.77	1.11**	1.05-1.17	1.08*	1.03-1.14	0.66**	0.64-0.69	0.27**	0.23-0.31
	Student	1.98**	1.92-2.04			0.61**	0.58-0.64	0.73**	0.70-0.76	0.64**	0.62-0.66	1.89**	1.78-1.99
	Retired			0.17**	0.15-0.19	1.28**	1.20-1.36	1.79**	1.69-1.89	0.91*	0.86-0.96	1.18**	1.08-1.28
Migration distance (km) (ref = 20-35)													
	36 – 50	1.90**	1.77-2.04	1.61**	1.54-1.68	0.85**	0.81-0.89	0.55**	0.53-0.57	1.23**	1.18-1.27		
	51 – 100	4.01**	3.80-4.23	1.96**	1.89-2.03	0.64**	0.61-0.67	0.34**	0.33-0.35	1.27**	1.23-1.31	1.14**	1.06-1.21
	101 – 150	7.93**	7.50-8.40	1.98**	1.90-2.06	0.54**	0.51-0.57	0.15**	0.14-0.16	0.94*	0.90-0.98	1.61**	1.49-1.74
	150 +	5.78**	5.52-6.06	2.13**	2.07-2.19	0.62**	0.60-0.64	0.11**	0.11-0.12	1.37**	1.33-1.40	1.57**	1.49-1.66
Constant		0.027**		0.139**		0.116**		0.394**		0.294**		0.042**	
N		38783		55777		25036		35314		53468		10930	
-2 Log-likelihood		129953.0		220663.3		147551.2		164404.6		231919.2		83212.7	

\* = p &lt; 0.05, \*\* = p &lt; 0.01.

Table 4. Multinomial logistic regression results (employment motives constitute the reference category).

Category	Variable	Education		Living environment		Housing		Social reasons		Other reasons	
		Odds ratio	95% C.I.	Odds ratio	95% C.I.	Odds ratio	95% C.I.	Odds ratio	95% C.I.	Odds ratio	95% C.I.
Gender (ref = male)	Female	1.47**	1.42-1.52	1.47**	1.42-1.52	1.40**	1.36-1.44	1.99**	1.94-2.04	1.39**	1.33-1.45
Age (years) (ref = 18-25)	26 – 37	0.40**	0.38-0.41	0.91**	0.86-0.95	0.82**	0.78-0.85	1.16**	1.12-1.20	0.94*	0.89-1.00
	38 – 59	0.07**	0.06-0.08	0.92*	0.87-0.98	0.65**	0.62-0.69	0.75**	0.72-0.79	1.22**	1.12-1.32
	60 – 74			3.28**	2.96-3.63	3.19**	2.90-3.51	2.24**	2.04-2.45	4.96**	4.37-5.62
Civil status (ref = single)	Married	0.11**	0.09-0.12	1.40**	1.34-1.47	1.67**	1.60-1.74	0.64**	0.62-0.67	1.30**	1.22-1.39
	Divorced	0.71**	0.60-0.83	1.07*	1.00-1.14	0.89**	0.83-0.95	1.72**	1.64-1.82	1.11*	1.01-1.22
	Widowed			1.98**	1.60-2.45	3.48**	2.85-4.25	3.39**	2.81-4.10	2.61**	2.06-3.31
Education (ref = compulsory)	Upper-secondary	5.10**	4.61-5.65	1.21**	1.14-1.28	1.07*	1.00-1.13	0.77**	0.73-0.81	0.59**	0.55-0.64
	University < 3 years	6.06**	5.45-6.74			0.92*	0.87-0.99	0.65**	0.62-0.69	0.69**	0.63-0.75
	University >= 3 years	0.53**	0.48-0.59	0.36**	0.34-0.39	0.58**	0.55-0.62	0.28**	0.26-0.29	0.28**	0.25-0.30
Income (ref = low)	Middle	0.56**	0.54-0.58	1.10**	1.06-1.15			0.88**	0.85-0.91	0.67**	0.64-0.71
	High	0.29**	0.26-0.32	1.55**	1.47-1.64	1.25**	1.19-1.32	1.61**	1.54-1.68	0.91*	0.85-0.98
Occupation (ref = employed)	Unemployed	0.73**	0.69-0.78	0.76**	0.72-0.81	0.75**	0.71-0.80	0.51**	0.49-0.54	0.19**	0.17-0.22
	Student	1.73**	1.66-1.79	0.65**	0.62-0.68	0.74**	0.71-0.78	0.74**	0.71-0.76	1.90**	1.80-2.02
	Retired			6.53**	5.75-7.42	8.10**	7.15-9.19	4.77**	4.22-5.40	6.17*	5.36-7.10
Migration distance (km) (ref = 20-35)	36 – 50	1.29**	1.20-1.39	0.60**	0.56-0.63	0.45**	0.43-0.48	0.81**	0.77-0.85	0.70**	0.64-0.76
	51 – 100	2.21**	2.08-2.34	0.39**	0.37-0.41	0.26**	0.25-0.28	0.72**	0.69-0.75	0.67**	0.62-0.72
	101 – 150	3.77**	3.53-4.02	0.33**	0.31-0.36	0.13**	0.12-0.14	0.58**	0.55-0.61		
	150 +	2.89**	2.74-3.04	0.36**	0.34-0.37	0.09**	0.09-0.10	0.73**	0.70-0.75	0.86**	0.81-0.91
N		38783		25036		35314		53486		10930	

\*= p<0.05, \*\*= p<0.01. -2 Log-likelihood Final = 232074.7.

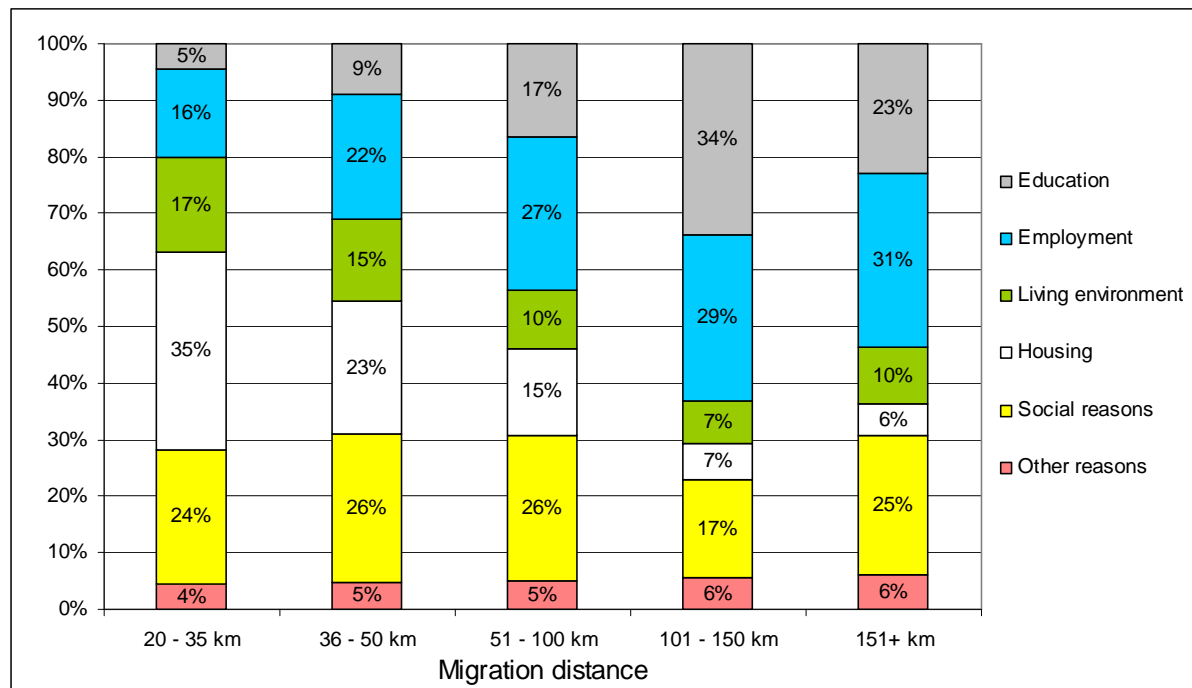


Fig. 1. How migration motives vary over distance (all migrants, weighted data)



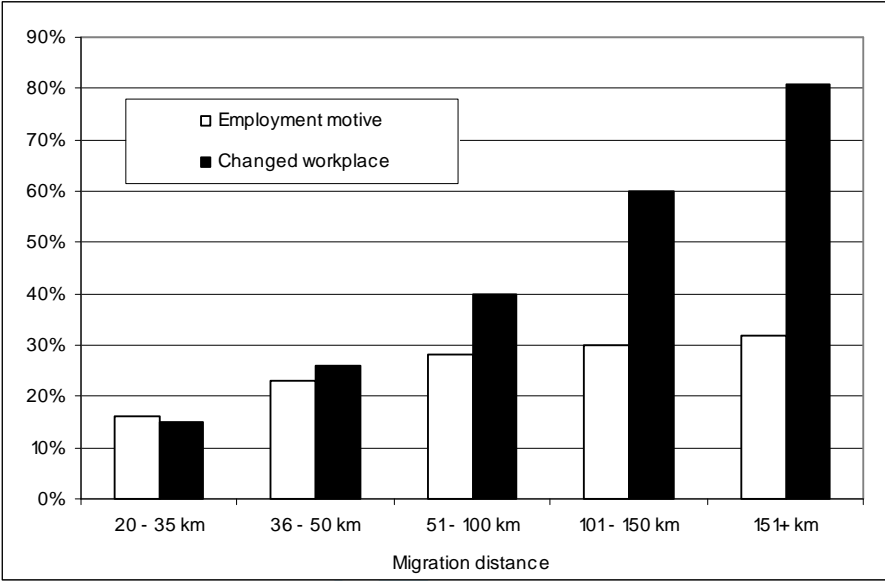


Fig. 2. Comparison between respondents stating employment as their main migration motive and respondents that changed their workplace when migrating, not mutually exclusive (all migrants aged 18-65 year, weighted data)

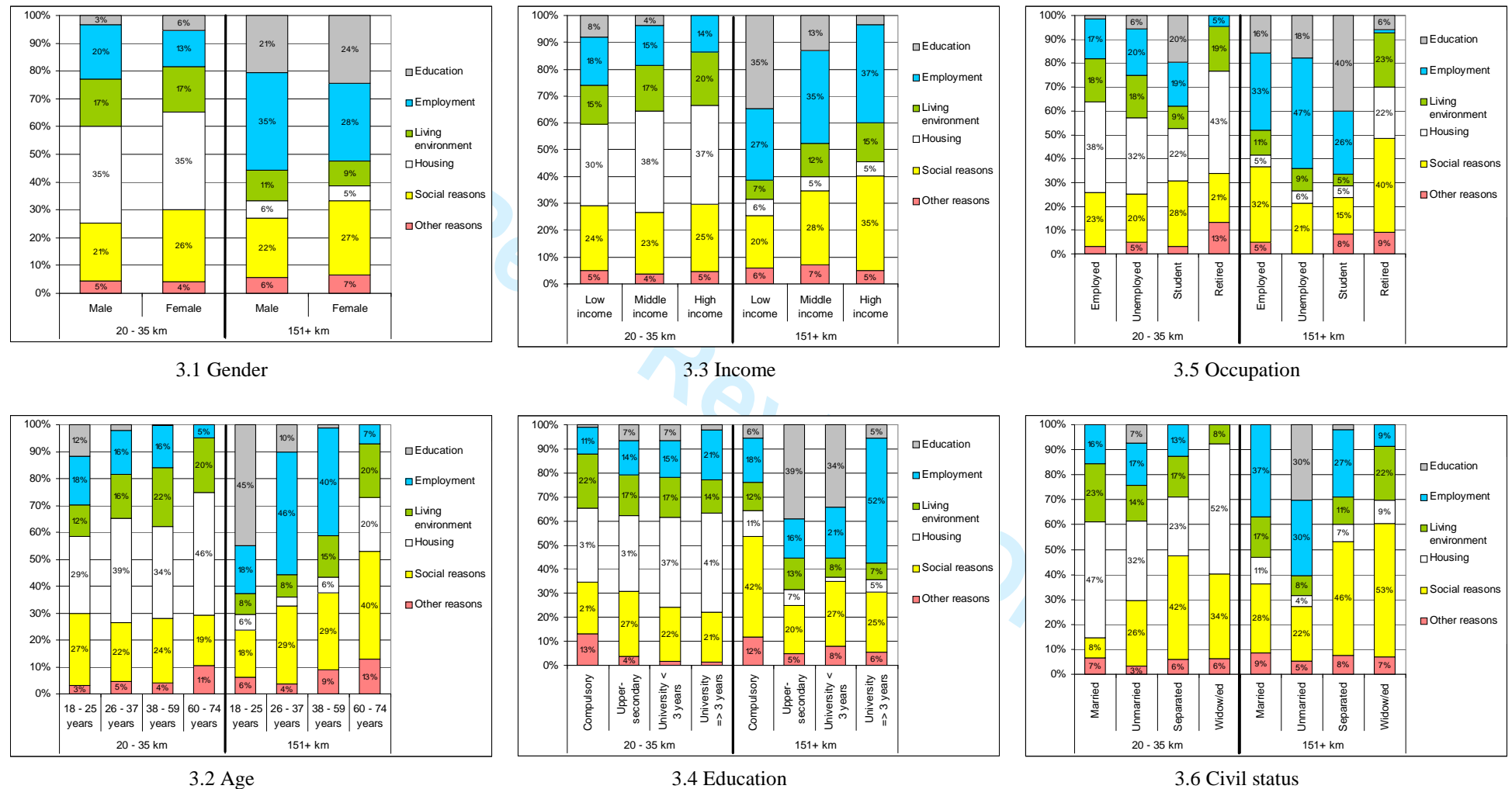


Fig. 3. How motives vary over distance for different migrant characteristics (weighted data)

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